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ABSTRACT

A description of how public colleges and universities became important to American higher education is presented by tracing their origins, development, and evolving missions. In the past three decades, the people of the United States have created the comprehensive public state college and university by the conversion of over 200 existing institutions, mostly professional schools, and the establishment of almost 150 new comprehensive institutions. These comprehensive institutions: are publicly established and controlled by state government systems; are primarily comprehensive institutions emphasizing professional programs; award predominantly baccalaureate and master's degrees; emphasize meeting the diverse needs of different states; have the primary faculty obligation to teach and remain at the cutting edge of knowledge in their field; are predominantly open-access institutions; and have primary funding from state taxes with a tradition of low or moderate tuition charges. Three sections focus on: origins and early developments (with a few specific examples); changing missions (e.g. increasing student attendance, a drop in faculty-student ratios, and a change in internal administrative patterns); and emergence of a new type of institution during and after the 1960s (recent changes in institutions and programs, changes in state coordination and governance, and changes in American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) institutional activities). (SM)

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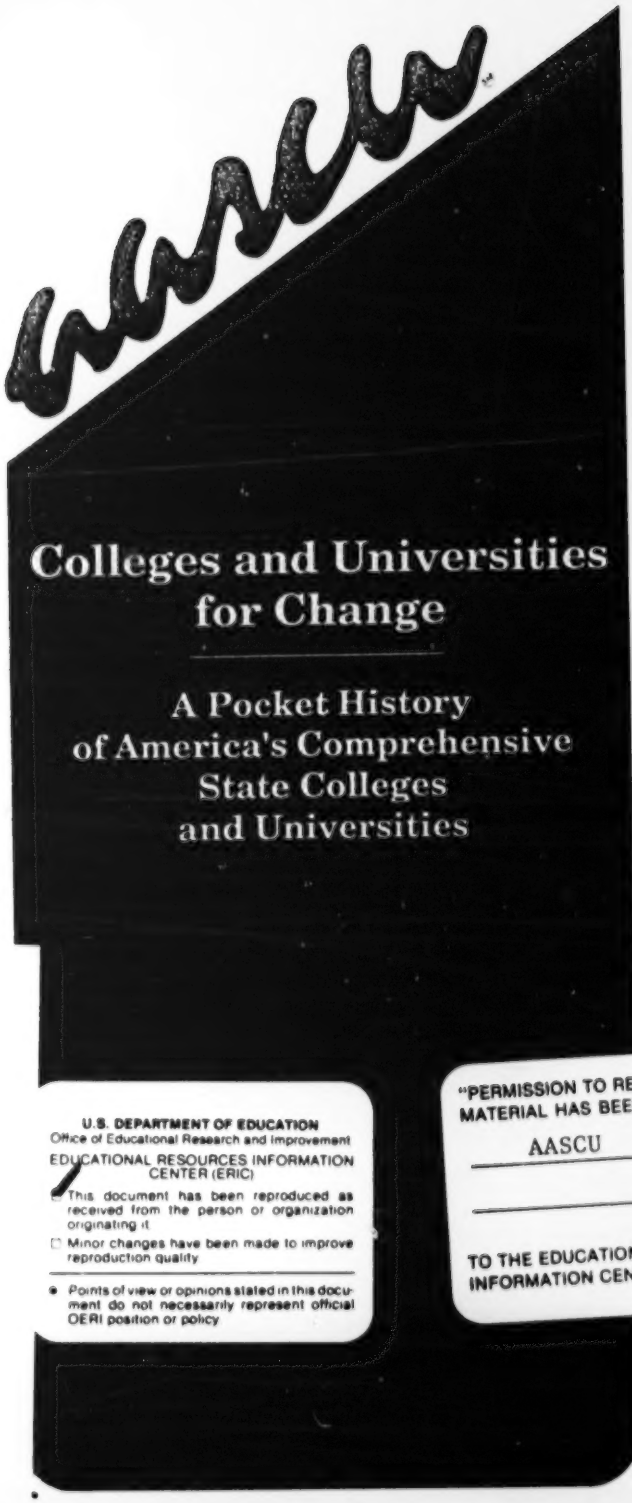
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Colleges and Universities for Change

A Pocket History of America's Comprehensive State Colleges and Universities

by
Fred F. Harcleroad

1988

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About the Author

Fred F. Harcleroad earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees from a comprehensive public state college, served over two decades in the California state universities, and was founding president of the California State University at Hayward in 1959. He earned his Ph.D. from Stanford University. One of three honorary members of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, he was a member of its board of directors for several years. His varied writings include a baseline historical study of the "Developing State Colleges and Universities" in 1966-67 and four other related studies of these diverse institutions. He and Allan W. Ostar are coauthors of *Colleges and Universities for Change*, published by the AASCU Press in 1987.

Introduction

Public colleges and universities are the springboards from which generations of students have taken their places as respected citizens and important contributors to American society. The values these colleges impart are basic: that education is an opportunity to better oneself as an individual; that education is an opportunity to better society through one's knowledge; and that all persons have a responsibility to all other persons. Society is better for these values. It will continue to get better as long as we are able to provide increasing numbers of students with the opportunity to learn at our AASCU institutions.

—Allan W. Ostar, President
American Association of State
Colleges and Universities

In the past three decades the people of the United States have completed the creation of a new, unique type of higher education institution: the comprehensive public state college and university. Developed by the conversion of well over 200 existing institutions, mostly professional schools, and the establishment of almost 150 new comprehensive institutions, this group of nearly 400 institutions shares the following characteristics:

- publicly established and controlled by state governance systems,
- primarily comprehensive institutions emphasizing professional programs,
- awarding predominantly baccalaureate and master's degrees,
- emphasis on meeting diverse needs of different states, primarily at the baccalaureate and

master's levels but including less-than-baccalaureate programs and doctoral programs in selected professional fields,
- primary faculty obligation to teach and to remain at the cutting edge of knowledge in their field,
- predominantly open-access institutions that emphasize equal opportunity, and
- primary funding from state taxes, with a tradition of low or moderate tuition charges.

Comprehensive public colleges and universities are clearly distinct from the first two institutional types established in America: the land-grant universities, which developed in the middle 1800s and were formalized by the Morrill Act of 1862; and the junior/community colleges, which started around the turn of the century. Although the contributions of the land-grant universities and the junior/community colleges have long been recognized, only recently has it become clear that the comprehensive universities and colleges have a distinctive mission that makes them a unique type of American public higher education institution. As a result, these institutions have been studied extensively during the past decade and emulated in dozens of countries throughout the world. What growth and characteristics led to this attention?

Over 2,800,000 students attended these institutions in fall 1987, one of every five in all of higher education. Thirty-three percent of the baccalaureate degrees earned in 1986 in the United States were awarded by these institutions, 27 percent of all master's degrees, and 7 percent of the doctorates. Many of these degrees were earned in badly needed, often newly planned and organized, educational programs.

Comprehensive public colleges and universities owe their remarkable growth to their flexibility and their diversity. Their ability to adapt and change has made them a crucial segment of the higher education community, and their growth in the past quarter century has been fostered by the development of the American Association of State

Colleges and Universities (AASCU). This organization, formed in 1961 to represent comprehensive state colleges and universities, has shaped their mission and strengthened their voice at the national level.

This pocket history illustrates how public colleges and universities became important to American higher education by tracing their origins, development, and evolving missions.

Origins and Early Developments

Some of the institutions in the comprehensive public college and university group evolved over a period of almost three centuries, while others have developed only within the last decade. Only two existing AASCU institutions precede the Revolutionary period in the United States: the College of William and Mary (1693) and the College of Charleston (1770), both creations of the existing colony or municipality.

Plans for the new nation led to the continuation of state rather than federal control of higher education. As part of the development of the Constitution and the new country, education played a very limited role. In fact, the Federalist Papers contained no references to schools, colleges, education, or universities.

Neither does the word *education* appear in the Constitution. According to the Tenth Amendment, this omission means that education is therefore a power "reserved to the states" rather than to the federal government. The states, then, have been the basic source of controlling laws and of charters granted to postsecondary institutions during the past two centuries, accounting, in some respects, for the diversity that marks these institutions even today.

In the years following the Revolution the original colonial colleges were reopened, but only a few new ones began operation. Only four more of what are now comprehensive colleges started before

1830, but as classical schools or academies, not as colleges. By the age of Andrew Jackson, the limited curricula of the classical colleges were no longer adequate to meet the changing demands of the society, and their small enrollments grew even smaller, with some having difficulty staying open.

Meanwhile, the new types of institutions, which grew up to meet these new demands, formed the nucleus of the comprehensive state group. They included normal schools, agricultural schools, technical institutes, colleges open to women and minorities other than Native Americans, mechanics institutes, and YMCA or physical culture schools. Many of these specialized, professional institutions exist today, broadened in scope. Also included in this group were a significant number of private institutions, such as Biblical institutes or "colleges" established by various religious groups, which were purchased by or given to the state and over a period of decades became state-controlled institutions. However, the largest number of these institutions began as state normal schools; hence the early history of the developing state colleges and universities was tied closely to the development of teacher education.

In the early post-Revoluntionary period, there was a strong impetus to develop some form of public education, with public support. It was a logical extension of the fundamental principles of the young democracy, promising equal freedoms and opportunities to all of its citizens. Since the federal Constitution had reserved education for the states, pressures developed within a number of the states for rapid expansion of public education. The major result of this pressure was the development of the "common school," which was supposed to provide a basic elementary education for every child in a given geographical region. Advocates of such public schools soon were confronted with the lack of adequately trained teachers. That they were needed was clear, but who should have responsibility for their training?

In the 1830s a debate arose about whether teachers should be trained in private academies, as was the case in New York, Maine, and Wisconsin, or in *normal schools*, teacher education institutions provided at public expense. Eventually, it became clear that academies could not prepare enough teachers and in some cases did not prepare them sufficiently. As a consequence, the public, state-created normal school or other forms of state-subsidized teacher preparation became necessary.

Public normal schools were finally established in 1839, 12 years after the development of the private normal schools. By 1850 six public state normal schools had been founded; 15 operated in 10 states in 1860.

The first apex of growth came in the 1890s when 46 current AASCU institutions were established, with 42 more started between 1900 and 1909. Besides establishing new teacher education institutions, several states took over control and financing of previously private institutions that came upon hard times. In all, a total of 248 of the current public state colleges and universities were newly established or taken over by the states between the 1830s and 1920s.

Significant differences rapidly developed between the normal schools founded in New England, particularly Massachusetts, and the "Western normal schools" that developed west of the Alleghenies. New England and southern normal schools were generally quite small, financed in a limited way, and restricted in the types of programs offered.

On the other hand, between the 1850s and the 1900s the Midwest, Rocky Mountain, and Pacific Coast states made the normal schools a prominent feature of their governmental planning for statewide education. Because these states had no entrenched systems of secondary education or of higher education, many of these normal schools started as collegiate-level institutions responsible for preparing teachers for the developing secondary schools as well as the elementary schools. Some western states allowed normal schools to participate in the distribution of income from state lands, making them stronger financially and allowing them to be more expansive in their curricular development.

A few examples illustrate the flexibility, adaptability, and change that still distinguish these institutions today.

College of William and Mary (VA), originally established as a private college, experienced serious financial problems following the Revolutionary War. At one point college administrators juggled courses to maintain enrollments, substituting gunnery instruction for humanities courses. After decades of struggle, it closed during the Civil War, reopened, then closed again in 1881. It finally reopened in 1888 after the Commonwealth of Virginia agreed to its financial support, providing the college would establish a program of teacher education.

Framingham State College (MA) is a direct descendant of Lexington Normal School, the first public normal school established in the United States at Lexington, Massachusetts in 1839. In 1844 it was moved to West Newton, Massachusetts, and in 1853 it was moved to Framingham. From 1853 until 1960 it was Framingham Normal School. In 1960 it became Framingham State College, and in 1964 it became coeducational.

Western Oregon State College in 1856 was chartered as Monmouth University, and later, in 1865, the name was changed to Christian College. As Christian College it was supported by the Disciples of Christ Church. In 1881 the Christian College added a normal school, and its name was changed to the Oregon State Normal School. In 1891 it became state supported; but in 1909 the state support was stopped, and three school was closed. In 1911 it was reopened as the Oregon Normal School. In 1939 it became the Oregon College of Education, and later, in 1981, it was renamed Western Oregon State College.

The **University of Tennessee at Chattanooga** was established as Chattanooga University, a private institution, in 1886. In 1889 it consolidated with East Tennessee Wesleyan University at Athens and was called Grant University. In 1907, it was renamed the University of Chattanooga. In 1969 the University of Chattanooga and the Chatannooga City College, a junior college, were merged and became a public campus, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Wichita State University (KS) began in 1892 as the Fairmount College, a private Congregational institution. In 1926 it went public and became the Municipal University of Wichita. In 1964, it entered the State System under state-control and became Wichita State University.

Central Connecticut State University began in 1849 as New Britain Normal School. In 1933, it was changed to the Teachers College of Connecticut, in 1959 to Central Connecticut State College, and on March 1, 1983, to its present designation.

Winston-Salem State University (NC) started in 1892 as "Slater Industrial Academy, A School for Negroes." In 1897 it was renamed Slater Industrial and State Normal School. In 1925 it became Winston-Salem Teachers College, in 1963 Winston-Salem State College, and in 1969 Winston-Salem State University.

Established primarily by the states, these normal schools were for the most part single-purpose institutions designed for the preparation of teachers. Few of them, however, devoted the entire curriculum to professional work in the education of teachers. Most of the normal schools devoted a substantial part of their program to subject-matter education as well, primarily those that were providing education in secondary-school teaching. In fact, this issue was the source of a major continuing debate in the area of teacher education. The broader approach provided the foundation for the movement from the normal school to the teachers college and eventually to the current multipurpose institution.

Three major factors contributed to the movement from the normal school to the teachers college:

- The demand for teachers in subject-matter fields was met in many cases by the adaptation of the normal schools. From 1880 to 1920, rapid expansion of secondary education throughout the United States increased demand, resulting in normal school expansion and eventual change.

- The accreditation movement begun in the late 1880s pushed the normal schools to become teachers colleges with admission based on high school

graduation. (Previously, normal schools had not required high school graduation as a prerequisite for admission.) It helped to advance the development of teacher specialization by subject field and made teachers colleges truly collegiate-level institutions.

• The pressure for additional opportunities for higher education during the early 1900s and particularly after World War I led many students to attend nearby normal schools and teachers colleges and to press for broadening of the curriculum in additional fields. This could not be considered a national trend by 1920, but it was certainly a strong regional trend in the Midwest, the Rocky Mountains, and the Pacific Coast areas.

Clearly, by the 1920s the beginnings of curricular expansion, program development, larger student bodies, and increasing financial support were evident. These development would be pushed even further in the next period, when these institutions began making the more radical changes in their missions.

Changing Missions

The decades between 1930 and 1960 included the most severe depression of the century, a massive world war, and enormous postwar changes. These events affected the public state colleges and universities and accelerated the rate of change in missions, in size, and in overall diversity of programs. As single-purpose institutions, most with a teacher education emphasis, they had been relatively overlooked in national studies, and little consideration had been given to their possibilities of service to the national needs. However, by the end of this 30-year period, comprehensive public colleges and universities had experienced astonishing growth and expansion of programs. By 1960, they were recognized as constituting a significant portion of American higher education.

During the 1930s and 1940s the rate of establishment of public state colleges and universities slowed considerably and came to a virtual halt during World War II. But following the end of World War II, 17 new institutions were started.

The institutions underwent a number of changes that finally took hold in the decade between 1930 and 1940, even though they had begun earlier:

• Student attendance increased, reaching 226,000 by 1940;

• Admission standards increased and were based on high school graduation rather than the common school diploma or entrance examinations that had been used earlier. Some of the colleges became much more selective because of their location and the fact that they were the major institutions serving a particular region;

• Emphasis on baccalaureate degree programs with strong general education requirements increased significantly, although many institutions retained their two-year teacher preparation programs. Subject-matter components of the programs were expanded greatly, particularly for secondary education but also elementary teacher education;

• Faculty-student ratios dropped to 16:1 by 1940;

• A majority of the faculty members teaching in these schools had earned master's degrees from accredited four-year institutions, and between 10 and 15 percent were the holders of doctorates from major institutions;

• Internal administrative patterns changed considerably. Increases in size made it necessary to add administrative staff to handle academic affairs, student services, and financial affairs. The normal schools with their "principals" had basically vanished and been replaced by presidents of teachers colleges or state colleges operating with vice presidents or deans;

• State requirements that all entering students be committed to a teaching career were relaxed or

deleted. The emphasis shifted toward the graduation requirements, and students could not receive a degree unless a teaching certificate was taken simultaneously. During the Thirties it became less and less a requirement to take such a teaching certificate. (From 1930 to 1960 almost all of the institutions dropped their teacher education requirements for graduation and followed the practice of other collegiate institutions in differentiating the requirements according to majors and requiring general education coursework for all students earning a degree.)

Immediately after World War II the President's Commission on Higher Education addressed the general status of public colleges and universities: "The great majority are called teachers colleges, but increasing numbers are becoming state colleges or state colleges of education. Practically all grant the bachelor's degree, many grant the master's degree, and several grant the doctor's degree. Increasingly the teachers colleges, particularly those which have become state colleges, are offering other curricula in addition to those for prospective teachers." In addition, the Commission noted: "Teachers colleges, while striving constantly to improve their primary and all important function of educating teachers, should also utilize their facilities wherever feasible to help carry on the other aspects of the higher education program," thereby directing the future development of these institutions.

The great increase in enrollments after World War II hit the public colleges and universities in an explosive fashion. Veterans returning to the colleges in many cases inundated them and totally changed their student composition in a relatively short time. In fact, in many institutions the number of men considerably exceeded that of women, a trend that was not to be reversed until major changes in student attendance some 20 years later.

The initial increase in enrollments in the early 1950s to almost 300,000 in this group of institutions shortly became the postwar "tidal wave" that was expected. In a decade enrollments increased

to close to a million students, and by 1966 these colleges and universities had 1,300,000 students. Since then the growth rate has accelerated, and these institutions have prepared an even larger number of the total baccalaureate and graduate program graduates in the United States.

Such growth led to increasing complexity in these now comprehensive institutions, evidenced primarily by a rapid development of new types of programs and an increase of between 400-500 percent in the graduate enrollments. If the institutions had become larger but stayed basically undergraduate in scope, their structure and mission could have remained relatively simple. However, the growth not only in size but also in complexity of programs and degrees resulted in major changes in the characteristics and goals of these institutions during the postwar period.

Emergence of a New Type of Institution

By 1960 the postwar demands of American society clearly required a new type of public institution. Recognizing their changing missions, growth in size, and expansion in programs, comprehensive public institutions in 1951 had developed the Association of Teacher Education Institutions (ATEI), a separate organization of public, state-supported colleges and universities. After ten years of operation, however, the members determined that they should establish a new association, one that would recognize the unique characteristics of this newly developing and expanding form of postsecondary education in the United States.

Accordingly, in 1961, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) was established, with membership open to any regionally accredited institution of higher education that offered programs leading to the degree of bachelor, master, or doctor and was wholly or partially state supported—and, more specifically, state controlled. The growing impact of the federal

government on higher education, particularly as it related to research grants and other grants-in-aid, had made it absolutely necessary that a strong national association be formed to represent the interests of students in state colleges and universities. The establishment of this new association provided the first formal recognition that a third major type of public institution had developed in the United States, designed to meet the changing requirements of the nation for increasingly varied and diverse institutions of higher education.

By 1962, 160 state colleges and universities had joined the association, including 22 that had not previously been members of the ATEI. They were attracted to the idea of the separate association representing a different type of institution, not specialized in curricula but comprehensive in outlook. Walter Hager, in his history, AA*SCU's First Ten Years,* listed four major purposes of the new association:

- To enable the members to make their influence felt in connection with national affairs . . . to be heard in national activities affecting higher education—as a voice, and not merely an echo,

- To present the strengths and services of state colleges and universities effectively to the public and to agencies and individuals from which grants of funds might be available,

- To represent the members of the association in the National Commission on Accrediting,

- To conduct studies of educational problems of common interest to the members.

In four years, by 1965, AASCU had grown to 170 members, and it was clear that this new association met a pressing need. As the older institutions grew and expanded in the 1960s, and as the states established many new comprehensive institutions, the members felt a commonality of mission that drew them together. The officers of the association determined to expand the program of services offered by AASCU and appointed Allan

W. Ostar, formerly of the Office of Institutional Research of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, to be AASCU's first full-time director. Under Ostar's leadership, AASCU developed its own priorities and unique methods of communication with its members, the federal government, and the public. At the same time it cooperated with other associations in the arena of higher educaton programs and politics. In particular, AASCU has from its beginnings cooperated with and been helped by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. Both organizations realized the value of one voice speaking for public higher education on many issues, especially federal issues.

As an agent for change in higher education at state, national, and institutional levels. AASCU has monitored the changes in the institutions, in programs, and in coordination and governance systems that have resulted in the emergence of a new type of public institution.

Recent Changes in Institutions

In 1950 the Millett Commission counted 162 public teachers colleges; by 1983 no teachers colleges were left in the United States, at least by name. Two of the last institutions with this designation, the Harris Teachers College in St. Louis and the Kansas State Teachers College in Emporia, have been renamed the Harris-Stowe College and Emporia State University.

At the same time that teachers colleges were disappearing, a large number of new institutions were created, which were basically comprehensive public institutions from the day of their creation. In the past 20 years, between 65 and 70 new comprehensive state colleges and universities were developed. The 50 created in the 1960s represent the largest effort of this type in the history of the United States, exceeding even the larger numbers of institutions established in the 1890s. They are mainly of two types: (1) new campuses created as a part of an existing university system or (2) new

institutions within a state system. Examples of the first type include the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (1965), the Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (1965), and the University of Houston at Clear Lake. Examples of newly developed institutions in a state system include the California State University at Bakersfield, San Bernardino, Dominguez Hills, and the Sonoma State University.

A very specialized subgroup of innovative, nontraditional, system-developed institutions also grew up during this period: Metropolitan State University in Minnesota (1971), Thomas A. Edison College in New Jersey (1972), and Empire State College in New York.

A considerable group (approximately 25) of upper-level institutions are currently in operation, mainly in Texas and Florida. Most of these institutions operate with five or six junior colleges/community colleges in the nearby region. As upper-division institutions begin to age, some may be facing the fate of those which began in the late 1940s (Los Angeles, Long Beach, Hayward, Fullerton, and Sacramento in California): the addition of a lower division. Because the demand for enrollment makes the project of adding a lower division attractive, upper-level universities may not continue as a major type of public institution.

Recent Changes in Programs

The last decade has magnified the program changes taking place in the public comprehensive state colleges and universities. This fact was demonstrated most clearly in an analysis of the undergraduate degrees and the fields in which they are offered. The National Commission on the Future of the State Colleges and Universities, established in 1971, compiled data on all baccalaureate degrees granted by the state colleges and universities in 1969. When compared with data on the baccalaureate degrees granted by state colleges and universities in 1981-82, the results are startling. Against an overall total increase of 37 percent, the growth was extremely large in such fields as agriculture (+111 percent), business (+191 percent), architecture (+707 percent), computer science (+4711 percent), engineering (+170 percent), and the health professions (+492 percent). Major decreases took place in education (-37 percent), foreign languages (-52 percent), social sciences (-47 percent), and mathematics (-65 percent). The drop in mathematics may well be directly responsible for the shortage of teachers the nation is now experiencing.

Changes in State Coordination and Governance

The development in the past 30 years of coordinating agencies of postsecondary education for the states (almost 30 of them), and the parallel development of statewide university systems, have led in many cases to increasing centralization of responsibility and authority for major decision making on programs, facilities, tuition, admission standards, and similar areas. For some of the older institutions, which grew out of the state departments of education (normal schools that became teachers colleges and then comprehensive institutions), membership in a state university system can provide greater autonomy and funding. On the other hand, newer institutions with faculty and administration attracted from relatively autonomous or flexible universities, often find working in a controlled university system or a coordinating board system to be somewhat confining.

Understanding this recent development is essential to any analysis of the developing state colleges and universities. For a quarter century these institutions have been encouraged to add or expand programs and meet needs of the changing society. Whether this expansion will be possible in the future, with closer statewide controls, limited budgets, and maximum accountability for program expenditures, is uncertain. To understand and respond to these issues, AASCU has extended cooperative membership to some 30 of the state systems and coordinating boards. As system members of the association, they attend regular AASCU meetings, which provide informal opportunities for discussion about important current and future policy issues.

Changes in AASCU Institutional Activity

Since AASCU's beginnings in 1961, the activities of the association have developed in response to and in anticipation of the changing needs of the member institutions. At the core of each new program or association activity was the desire to establish the national identity of state colleges and universities, to strengthen the institutions' capacities to provide high-quality instruction, to expand their global perspectives and international involvement, and to represent their interests collectively at the state and national level.

Recognition of the need to represent the interests of comprehensive public colleges and universities at the national level was the association's original reason for being. AASCU's Office of Governmental Relations (OGR), which oversees Federal Relations, Interassociational Relations, Policy Analysis, State Relations, and the Council of State Representatives, was created to monitor federal and state legislation and act as liaison between the federal offices, Congress, state-related organizations and its members. The function of this office, which becomes more and more important to AASCU every year, is to analyze pending legislation to determine which bills are likely to have an impact on AASCU-member institutions and to keep members informed of their status.

To make the views of AASCU and its members known on legislation currently being considered by Congress, OGR arranges for member presidents to testify on issues of critical importance. In addition, OGR has sponsored a national legislative seminar each year, which provides AASCU members with an opportunity to attend important briefings on legislation and federal programs affecting higher education. In short, all of OGR's efforts help ensure that comprehensive public colleges and universities receive the support and attention they need to provide high-quality education for the 2.5 million students they serve.

Once state colleges and universities knew they had developed through AASCU a national identity and a strong unified voice, they began to recognize their mutual programmatic interests as well. The development of the AASCU Office of International Programs illustrates this point.

The AASCU interest in international programs grew out of the association's recognition of the need for AASCU campuses to include an international component. The founders of the association knew that AASCU colleges and universities, set up primarily to serve specific communities and regions, also had the responsibility for providing their students with global perspectives. Thus, AASCU created an Office of International Programs (OIP) to oversee the task of introducing this international element into the curricula and the campuses of AASCU institutions. From the first, OIP helped AASCU campuses set up linkages with overseas institutions that include the exchange of faculty and students. But OIP also understood that global perspectives could be achieved in more basic ways as well, and therefore showed AASCU institutions how to restructure and combine segments of the curriculum to emphasize the comparative aspects of, for example, religious, political, or economic systems. This collaboration within the various departments of the institution itself has broadened the perspectives of students and faculty alike, and OIP now runs conferences to facilitate the introduction and expansion of these international perspectives in the curriculum. Moreover, OIP routinely keeps campuses informed of international activities that enhance the international component of their campuses.

A primary function of the office has always been to organize missions to take groups of presidents from AASCU campuses to visit institutions in such countries as China, Argentina, Cuba, Poland, France, Yugoslavia, Taiwan, and Colombia. These missions, often reciprocal, introduce AASCU presidents to the educators and educational systems of other countries and provide a mechanism for the exchanges of personnel that maintain the flow of ideas, talent, and understanding that continue long after the mission's end.

Under the division of Academic Programs, the Resource Center for Planned Change, begun in

1974 and now called the Academic Affairs Resource Center, grew out of AASCU's recognition of the need for state colleges and universities to adjust efficiently and effectively to change through strategic planning. Considered a model for change at the time it was created, the Resource Center helped the academic leaders of AASCU institutions develop comprehensive approaches to the critical issues facing their campuses.

The work of the Resource Center is accomplished primarily through its network of Center Associates, drawn from the senior academic officers of each AASCU institution. This nationwide network represents the first time the academic officers of state colleges and universities had the opportunity to meet regularly and discuss specific questions relating to academic programs. The Center Associates still conduct regional meetings each year. The dialogue they have established allows AASCU institutions to benefit from the experience of colleagues and often leads to solutions to perplexing campus problems.

The Resource Center's original work focused on the development of an institutional planning process. Later, it received grants to define and evaluate the baccalaureate degree and to establish an advisory colleague network that would offer advice to member institutions on a variety of administrative issues. But throughout its 10-year existence, the primary goal of the Resource Center has been to enable the academic leaders of state colleges and universities to use each other as resources to tap the enormous wealth of ideas and solutions that AASCU schools can offer to each other.

To help AASCU institutions take advantage of federal and private grant opportunities, the association developed the Office of Federal Programs (OFP), a service that provides a constant flow of grants information to participating members.

Academic Programs also provides a focal point within the association for major programs in urban affairs; agriculture, renewable resources and rural development; continuing education; economic development; and educational equity.

The division of Educational Resources, was created in 1987 to serve the diverse needs of both internal and external constituencies. The seven programs within Educational Resources are the Office of Association Research and Information Resources; Consultant Referral Services; AASCU Foundation; Grants, Management and Development; Office for the Advancement of Public Black Colleges; Office of Publications; and the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges.

The growth of all of these programs mirrors the expanding needs of the institutions they represent. In the 25 years of its existence, AASCU has been unbending in one respect only: its determination to improve the image and the programs of the state colleges and universities it serves.

Conclusion

As the American Association of State Colleges and Universities reaches its 28th year, it is clear that the institutions it represents—comprehensive state colleges and universities—have come into their own. Once neglected by national researchers on higher education, a recent Minter and Bowen study referred to them as one of the "three major components of public education."

Their phenomenal growth and diversification have brought them at last to their rightful place in the higher education community. These institutions, along with the association that represents them, have joined together to better meet the developing needs of millions of students in decades to come.